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THE IMPACT OF PLACE ATTACHMENT ON CAMP COUNSELOR RETENTION IN SUMMER CAMPS

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THE IMPACT OF PLACE ATTACHMENT ON CAMP
COUNSELORS RETENTION IN SUMMER CAMPS

A Thesis
Presented to
the Graduate School of
Clemson University

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Masters of Science
Parks, Recreation, and Tourism Management

by
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Accepted by:
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ABSTRACT

Summer camps employ over one million staff members every summer, most of whom fall between the age range of 18-25 (ACA, 2012). Surveys done by the American Camp Association show that approximately 50% of camps have a 48% rate of return for counselors each summer, yet little research has been conducted to focus on what impacts staff retention (ACA, 2011). The theory of place attachment proposes that people form and retain bonds to physical locations by means of place dependence, place identity, social bonding, and affective attachment (Kyle, Mowen, & Tarrant, 2004; Milligan, 1998; Scannell & Gifford, 2010). Place attachment literature has been used to explain workplace attachment and employee retention in other settings, but it has never been applied to organized camps (Inalhan & Finch, 2004; Pretty, Chipuer, & Bramston, 2003). The purpose of this study was to examine the connection between a counselor's place attachment to camp and his or her intent to return to the same camp for another summer of employment. An online survey was administered to camp counselors who worked at various camps during the summer of 2012. This survey consisted of participant demographics, camp experience, place attachment, and his/her intent to return. The results demonstrated that place attachment to camp was related to a counselor's intent to return to camp the next summer, and a relationship was found between the number of years a counselor worked at camp and his/her place attachment to camp. Age and gender did not play a role in place attachment or intent to return to camp. The uniqueness of the environment of camp may explain why place dependence and affective attachment are formed. Place identity in counselors could be a result of personal growth experienced

at camp because of the unique role that being a camp counselor provides to emerging adults. While social bonding did not have as strong an impact in this study as expected, previous research on the social aspect of counselors provides direction for further research on this area and the other sub-dimensions of place attachment. Future research on how to facilitate place attachment through involvement of counselors in and out of camp could provide deeper insight to counselor retention and the growth of camp as an industry.

DEDICATION

For the campers and staff of Camp Sertoma and Camp Hope. You make the
Clemson Outdoor Lab home.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

My pursuit of a graduate degree in Parks, Recreation, and Tourism Management began as a result of my experiences as a summer staff member at the Clemson Outdoor Lab. The staff and campers showed me the power of camp, and I am forever changed because of them.

During my time as a master's student, it was my fellow graduate students and PRTM faculty who pushed and supported me as I walked through this process. I want to especially thank Dr. Dart Schmalz, Dr. Teresa Tucker, and Dr. Betty Baldwin for their continuous support and willingness to challenge me to think deeper.

Finally, a special thank you to my family and friends. My parents, Phillip and Alice Nichols, I would be lost without your constant encouragement and love. Thank you for always believing in me. To my friends: thank you for loving me in spite of my shortcomings, providing a shoulder to lean on, and always finding a way to bring laughter into my life. I am incredibly blessed.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Over 11 million children attend camp in the U.S. summer including both residential and day camp programs, according to the American Camp Association (ACA; 2012). The United States has approximately 12,000 camps that are facilitated by over 1 million staff members that serve as counselors, lifeguards, activity specialists, nurses, food service and many other vital positions (ACA, 2012). The American Camp Association (ACA) states that there has been a 90% increase in the number of day camps in the last twenty years alone (ACA, 2012).

The growth in camp attendance may be due to the positive impact camp has on children and adolescents. Parents of campers list “building self-confidence, self-esteem, social skills and making friends” as reasons why they see camp as an important place to send their children during the summer (ACA, 2012). Research has indicated that going to summer camp has a positive impact on youth development. Garst et al. (2011) notes that children and youth attending summer camps are found to have increased intrapersonal skills with other children and with adults. Research noted outcomes such as “self-esteem, peer relationships, independence, adventure and exploration, leadership, environmental awareness, friendship skills, values and decisions, social comfort and spirituality” (Garst et al., 2011, pg. 81) as outcomes campers had from experiences at camp. Dahl (2009) discusses these transformations amongst youth may be due to the “transformative spaces” such as a place like camp (pg. 232). This is based on the structure and environment that

camp provides children because it is typically located in nature and programming is structured so that growth can occur in young people (Dahl, 2009).

Camp counselors have a direct impact on how and why these children gain such vital life skills while attending camp. Due to their role as a caretaker, Dahl (2009) discusses the impact that counselors have on campers because they “served as both guides and role models” (pg. 233) for these young children. Despite the fact that many camps offer low wages, long hours, and little time off, there is a high return rate for camp counselors (ACA, 2012; Soyars, 2010; Waskul, 1999). The ACA’s staff retention survey cites “48% of camps report a staff return of 50% or more” (ACA, 2011). Camp directors spend time recruiting and interviewing potential staff prior to the start of summer. Once staff members are selected, proper training is important to ensure the safety and well being of the children because the counselors become the primary care takers for the campers (Lyons, 2003; Soyars, 2010). Returning counselors offer the experience of previous summers at camp that provides unique guidance for new counselors as they take on a new position at camp. One camp director wrote this about returning staff:

“Retaining a quality staff is key to having a great camp. There is a synergy built upon returning staff — they are experienced, capable, and already committed to the mission of the camp” (Byrnes, 2004).

Since returning counselors are fundamental to the camp environment, discovering what prompts their return will give camp directors the ability to increase retention and therefore create a stronger camp environment.

Most camp counselors fall within the age range of 18 – 25, which has recently been identified in research as “emerging adulthood” (Arnett, 2000, 2006, 2007). Having an understanding of the life circumstances and context of this population is important in considering what they look for in their work environments. There are several reasons why this particular stage of life is described as emerging adulthood. Individuals within this developmental stage are typically searching for their identity through experiencing new things and challenging their set of beliefs. Even though society has dubbed the members of this developmental stage as adults, most often these young people don’t view themselves as adults (Arnett, 2000; Arnett, 2006; Bynner, 2005). Arnett (2006) noted “accepting responsibility for your self, making independent decisions, and becoming financially independent” are most commonly referenced as the “top criteria for adulthood” (pg. 12). Arnett (2006) goes on to discuss that these qualifications for adulthood are not reached in one moment, but a slow and ongoing change. Individuals within the emerging adult phase are starting to make those life changes but have not fully reached the adulthood stage.

While the literature on emerging adulthood describes a need for new life experiences, returning camp staff seems to go against this need to have those challenges and adventure. Some of the literature that has studied counselors speaks to a “loyalty” and bond to camp (Johnson, Goldman, Garey, Britner, & Weaver, 2010; Waskul, 1999). This concept of loyalty to camp could be explained through the Theory of Place Attachment. This theory explains the complex connection that people have with examples such as childhood homes, a favored vacation spot, a place in nature, or just a physical

location (Hidalgo, 2001; Inalhan & Finch, 2004; Milligan, 1998). These attachments are formed due to various different reasons through social interactions or individual contact with the physical place. This theory takes into account the person, place and the process of how an attachment is formed (Beckley, Stedman, Wallace, & Ambard, 2007; Hidalgo, 2001; Manzo, 2006; Milligan, 1998; Scannell & Gifford, 2010; White & Green, 2010). Place attachment has been used in other fields to explain why people choose to either stay at their current place of employment or choose to not relocate for a job because of the attachments to the place (Inalhan & Finch, 2004; Kuipers, 2009; Riketta & Dick, 2005; White & Green, 2010).

Since this theory explains why and how bonds are formed and kept over long periods of time, even after the person has been removed from the place they cherish, it may provide a window of understanding to why counselors return to camp. In a study done by Waskul (1998), he looked at the social and intrapersonal shifts that occurred within the counselors throughout a summer while working at a camp. His research showed references of that after only a few weeks camp became “home” to several camp staff (Waskul, 1998). This concept of “home” and being attached to a place highlights the theory of place attachment (Milligan, 1998).

Since place attachment explains why people have emotional bonds to physical places or things, it has been used to examine what causes employees to remain or leave at their workplace. Employee retention is studied in business, non-for profits, healthcare, childcare, and many other fields (Brown & Yoshioka, 2003; Curry, Mccarragher, & Dellmannjenkins, 2005; Kuipers, 2009; Ramlall, 2004). Retaining trained employees cut

costs for businesses and offers added benefits such as the knowledge that experienced workers have to offer (Ramlall, 2004; Sheridan, 1992).

“Excessive turnover of quality person disrupts planning, results in a loss of job efficiency and is bout to affect staff morale and client relations, making it very expensive for the firm” (Doll, 1983, pg.1).

Even though this quote applies to an accounting business setting, the primary meaning can be extrapolated for camps. Focusing on employee retention in other fields offers guidance to why this is just as important in the camping industry. Returning counselors offer a plethora of veteran experience working with campers, understanding the mission and purpose of the camp, and leadership to aid the growth of the summer camp.

Benefits on camp staff have begun to be researched. Garst et al. (2009) examined the benefits of working at a camp for the staff as young adults. He found that many of the same benefits that young campers gain from the camping experience are seen in the young adults that work at camp such as

“positive self-identity, skill development, provides multi-faceted skill development, stimulates career exploration and reflection, and provides opportunity for young adults to be a contributing part of a community” (Garst et al., 2009, pg. 11).

Garst et al. (2009) suggested that it was possible the unique environment of camp in it’s “transformative learning condition, including the role of rituals, tradition, and simple lifestyle” (pg. 11) may have had an impact on the development within counselors.

In another article, Garst et al. (2011) examines how young adults are better

rounded in relationships and as active members of their hometowns. Even though the benefits are geared toward campers, counselors glean the same positive outcomes the campers themselves do.

While the research discusses the benefits of camp for counselors, outside of those parameters the research is sparse. The majority of the research surrounds the transformation that counselors undergo as individuals, gaining life skills and an understanding of themselves and the world around them (Garst et al., 2009; Garst et al., 2011; Soyars, 2010; Waskul, 1998). Hiring a summer staff is vital to every camp in order to have a successful camping season. According to a study done by the American Camp Association on staff recruitment, out of seventy-eight camps questioned, thirty-seven camps had staffs comprised of 50-74% returning staff members. Fifteen camps had 75-100% of their staff be returners (ACA, 2011). Why do such high rates of return occur amongst camp staff? Does this bond to camp and calling it “home” play a roll in why counselors return to camp for more summers of employment? Does the theory of place attachment explain this occurrence? These questions are unanswered by the literature.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this research is to find if there is a relationship between a counselor’s place attachment to camp and an increased intent to return to that camp for another summer of employment. Returning staff offers camp directors and campers the experience and knowledge that new staff members do not possess. By gaining a better understanding of how attachments influence counselors to return to camp, camp directors

can better understand how to retain staff strengthening their camp program and providing a better environment for campers.

Research Question

Hypothesis 1: There will be a positive relationship as the number of years a counselor has worked at camp increases; so will their level of place attachment.

Hypothesis 2: There will be a positive relationship as a camp counselor's level of place attachment increases; so will their level of intent to return to camp next summer.

Hypothesis 3: The demographics of age and gender will play a role in the relationship on place attachment and intent to return.

- a. There will be a negative relationship between the age of the counselor and their intent to return.
- b. There will be no relationship between gender and intent to return and/or place attachment.

Definition of Terms

Camp: “a sustained experience which provide a creative, recreational and educational opportunity in group living in the out-of-doors. It utilizes trained leadership and the resources of the natural surrounding to contribute to each camper’s mental, physical, social, and spiritual growth” (ACA, 2007 pg. 299). For this purpose of this study, camp will be classified as a residential camp. Camps should be recreational or leisure based programs with a nature/outdoor-based environment.

Counselor: “paid or unpaid staff hired, trained and directly supervised by the camp, who may be seasonal or year-round, full time or part time” (ACA, 2007, pg. 299). Counselors must have worked at least one summer at a residential camp and lived at camp for at least six consecutive weeks.

Place Attachment: There are four sub-dimensions of place attachment that will be used in this study 1) Place Dependence, 2) Place Identity, 3) Affective Attachment, and 4) Social Bonding (Kyle, Mowen, Tarrant, 2004). Place dependence explains an individual’s bond with a place due to their interaction and fulfillment they get from a place (Williams & Roggenbuck, 1989; Kyle, in print). Place identity looks at the individual’s personal identity formation within that location (Kyle, in print). Affective attachment is the positive feelings associated in and for a specific place usually due to a person’s bond and interaction within a specific place (Jorgensen & Stedman, 2001). Social bonding examines bonds between people and a place based on the communication, support, and interpersonal relationships formed in a place or setting of the experience (Inalhan & Finch, 2004; Pretty, Chipuer, & Bramston, 2003). This will be the independent variable for this study.

Retention: “Returning camp staff who worked as cabin counselors the previous summer at the same camp” (Becker, 1983, pg. 7) For the context of this study, the sample participants will be counselors and other summer staff who have direct contact with campers such as activity leaders. This will be the dependent variable for this study.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

The purpose of this research is to find if there is a relationship between a counselor's place attachment to camp and an increased intent to return to that camp for another summer of employment. Understanding the factors influencing employee retention allows camp administrators to increase employee retention.

In this chapter, a complete review of the related literature will be provided in 7 sections: (1) Employee Retention, (2) Camp, (3) Emerging Adulthood, (4) The Role of Summer Camp in Emerging Adulthood Development, (5) Attachment to Camp, (6) Place Attachment, and (7) Theory of Planned Behavior. A summary will follow the reviews of the previous research.

Employee Retention

Employee retention is an important issue among various types of corporations. There is a growing trend of consumers that are not pleased with "excessive turnover and are demanding the expertise that comes with experience" (Hermansen, Carcell, Hermanson, Polansky, & Williams, 1995, pg. 39). Employees that have been well trained and have the knowledge and leadership from years of experiences offer many benefits to any company (Hermanson et. al, 1995).

Corporations spend time reviewing applications and references, meeting with employee candidates, and hiring those that fit the needs of that workplace. If a suitable employee is found, companies want to keep that employee long term for cost effectiveness and they do not want to lose quality employees (Ramlall, 2004; Sheridan,

1992). One of the reasons that companies want to keep their quality employees is due to the “the concept of human capital and knowledge management is that people possesses skills, experience and knowledge, and therefore have economic value to organizations” (Ramlall, 2004, pg. 53). Employees that have been well-trained and have invaluable knowledge from experiences within that workplace are of great value to their employers (Sheridan, 1992). Therefore, it is important to gain better understanding of factors that influence employee retention.

The business sector has tried to understand the motivations of employees remaining or leaving their place of work. Sheridan (1992) looked at organizational cultures and if the values of certain companies played a role in employees staying in their current position. Within the cases he studied, the companies that emphasized interpersonal relationships were more likely to keep employees at least fourteen months longer (Sheridan, 1992). Relational emphasizing workplaces were also found to retain employees overall, regardless of their strength of ability in the workplace (Sheridan, 1992).

Another factor that has been identified as playing into employee retention is workplace attachment. Riketta and Dick (2005) described workplace attachment as “a common label for two closely related concepts: identification and affective (also known as attitudinal) commitment” (pg. 491). Research has shown employees have various reasons for committing to one workplace over another (Brown & Yoshioka, 2003; Kuipers, 2009; Riketta & Dick, 2005; Sheridan, 1992). Some reasons are organizational goals, location, community among employees, and organization culture. Further, studies

have found strong attachments were formed due to relationships to workgroups or co-workers (Kuipers, 2009 Riketta, & Dick, 2005).

Beyond corporations, employee retention research has also been done in non-profit based organizations (Brown & Yoshioka, 2003). This research focused on the motivation levels of employees to remain with a company based on the mission statement. Researchers concluded there were three main factors that influence employees to remain with their non-profit workplaces (1) awareness, (2) agreement, and (3) alignment. If employees clearly understand the company's mission, they feel the purpose of the company has good value and purpose, and that the purposes line up with their personal belief system, the employees are much more apt to remain with that company if all three factors are present (Brown & Yoshioka, 2003).

Employee retention has been studied in a variety of companies and workplaces, but has scarcely been looked at in the camp setting, particularly in the retention of camp counselors. A study was done in 1983 on job satisfaction of returning camp counselors (Becker, 1983). However, it did not address camp staff retention through the lens of place attachment or emerging adulthood. Most recently, a study was done focusing on camp counselors and their influence to return to camp based upon their sense of community (McCole, Jacobs, Lindley, & McAvoy, 2012). This study concluded that counselors were more apt to return to camp if their sense of community within their camp was strong. The implications of this study show that there could be other viable factors influencing employee retention of camp counselors.

Camp

According to the American Camp Association (ACA), over 1.2 million people are employed each year as counselors, waterfront, kitchen staff and other roles in order to provide the best camping experience for the campers (ACA, 2012). Camps provide the structure and positive environment for youth development through the tasks of their counselors. The position of camp counselor puts staff members in the role caretaker of the campers (Loveland, Gibson, Lounsbury, & Huffstetler, 2005). Counselors become the pseudo-parent while children are at camp. Camp staff encompasses those whom take on valuable jobs of maintenance or kitchen work. Garst et al. (2011) supported this idea by discussing the importance of kind, responsible adults as a key part of the positive youth development process. At camp, there are cultural norms established by:

...behavior expectations posted around the camp property, and the ways that camp personnel demonstrate consistency and commitment to the camp policies.

Camps establish norms through staff recruitment and training programs that teach staff how to model the camp's desired norms (Garst et al., 2011, pg. 77).

Although counselors are vital to the youth development of campers, there has only been a limited amount of research that explores the impact the camp experience has on college-aged employees. Some research has shown many of the benefits campers experience while at camp are also found in the staff (Carter & Kotrlik, 2008; Dahl, 2009; DeGraaf & Glover, 2003; Henderson, Whitaker, Bialeschki, Scanlin, & Thurber, 2007; Johnson, Goldman, Garey, Britner, & Weaver, 2010). Understanding motivations of

counselors returning to camp will aid camp directors in retaining more staff from year to year, therefore strengthening their camp program (Byrnes, 2004).

In an assessment of camps, the ACA (2011) said there is a 50% staff retention rate in approximately 48% of camps surveyed about staff. Even though retention rates are reported by camps, the reasoning behind them are scarcely discussed or studied (Johnson et al., 2010). Counselors provide the backbone of camp through supervision, energy, activities, and bringing life to camp (Garst et al., 2011; Johnson et al., 2010). Keeping well-trained counselors is important to camps to keep the “mission” of camp alive (Byrnes, 2004).

In a study by DeGraaf and Glover (2003), discovered former camp staff members that had been away from camp for a number of years were interviewed. Counselors discussed how the camp experience still had major implications on their life in how they might parent, choose a job, or conduct themselves in everyday life. Even twenty-five years away from camp, some of staff noted a smell or sound instantly took them back to the camp at which they worked (DeGraaf & Glover, 2003). Since returning counselors provide an important role on youth development for campers, understanding the motivations behind camp counselors’ retention is important.

Emerging Adulthood

The vast majority of camp counselors employed at various camps across the United States are between the ages of 18 and 25. This developmental stage is known as emerging adulthood (Arnett, 2000, 2006, 2007; Bynner, 2005; Schwartz, Côté, & Arnett, 2005). Arnett developed the idea of emerging adulthood from a commentary by Erik

Erikson (1968). Erikson discussed the changes in developing adolescence and young adulthood by saying:

Rapid technology changes make it impossible for any traditional way of being older to be come so institutionalized that the younger generation can step right into it or, indeed, resist it in a revolutionary fashion. Aging, for example will be (or already is) a quite different experience for those who find themselves occupationally outdated for those who have somewhat more lasting to offer (Erikson, 1968, pg. 38).

While Erikson (1968) did not solidify the idea of emerging adulthood, he recognized a shift in culture was driving a change in the psychological development of youth.

Arnett took this idea and expanded on it to develop this concept of emerging adulthood. According to Arnett (2006), individuals aged 18 through 25 are in between adolescence and young adulthood. Often, they are out of their childhood homes for the majority of the time living at college, but have yet to become fully independent.

Emerging adults are usually, but not always, categorized by members that are in college or have gotten a higher degree and are no longer living at home (Arnett, 2000, 2006, 2007; Brynner, 2005).

Arnett (2000, 2006, 2007) contended emerging adulthood is a unique stage in development during which time they explore their independence and view on life. They are often caught in a limbo between the adolescence and adulthood. Emerging adulthood presents opportunity for exploration on life, love and belief systems. Emerging adults often change their majors and/or seek new experiences such as traveling, sexual practices,

drinking, various vocational opportunities, and many other changes could take place during this developmental stage (Arnett, 2006).

Emerging adulthood is strongly influenced by cultural norms and demographics. Bynner (2005) supported Arnett in finding that industrialized nations such as England, Germany, and the United States typically have a more pronounced emerging adulthood population than countries that are not fully industrialized. Having increased access to education and technology may influence these characteristics in the young generations (Arnett, 2000, 2006, 2007; Bynner, 2005). In most industrialized countries such as the United States, Canada or Germany, it is often expected once a teenager graduates high school he or she will move onto gaining further education or a job that will lead them into a career (Arnett, 2000).

Over the past century, the United States has seen a major shift during the years post high school in a person's life (Arnett, 2007). Between the 1960's and the 1990's the average age of marriage rose by almost four years for both men and women; from 23 to 27 for men and from 20 to 24 in women (Arnett, 2006). An increased rate of men and women seeking degrees in higher education was in large part the major reason why the median marrying age rose (Arnett, 2006). People would "now wait until at least their late 20's to marry and have their first child is that they are focused before that time on obtaining higher education and then finding a desirable occupation" (Arnett, 2006, pg. 6).

Emerging adulthood is subjective in the sense that emerging adults vary in their personal view themselves in their progression to adulthood (Arnett, 2000; Arnett, 2006; Bynner, 2005; Schwartz et al., 2005). Arnett (2000) found "accepting responsibility for

one's self, making independent decisions, and becoming financially independent" (pg. 473) were the top three reasons given if a person was to believe themselves to be an adult. According to the theory, emerging adults have not accepted these responsibilities for themselves and are therefore still growing into, or emerging into, adulthood.

Emerging adults are willing to try out unique employment and educational opportunities (Arnett, 2000). For example, Arnett (2000) discussed short-term volunteering opportunities are popular during this developmental stage. He goes on to state: "emerging adults may also travel to a different part of the country or world on their own for a limited period, often in the context of a limited term work or educational experience" (Arnett, 2000, pg. 474).

Summer camps are typically based on an academic schedule and provide opportunities for new experiences and exploration of self in the process that it fits within the idea of a short term work experience for emerging adults (Arnett, 2000; Arnett, 2006). Arnett (2000) also noted during this time, emerging adults are more apt to take on jobs that will prepare them for future careers. This concept of job preparation was represented in a study researching the lasting impacts of working at a 4-H camp had on its counselors (Digby, 2005). Research conducted on former counselors, ranging in ages 17– 24, allowed the participants in the study to discuss the impacts of working at the 4-H camp had on their lives and career paths (Digby, 2005).

The concept of acquiring new skills while working at camp was supported by Johnson et al. (2010): "...the moratorium environment available in the camp bubble seems to be especially well suited for the developmental tasks of emerging adults" (pg.

288). The researcher went on to explain being a camp counselor allowed them to have experiences to both play like children and to take on the responsibilities of an adult due to their parent-like roles as counselors (Johnson et al., 2010). In short, the camp environment fosters the growth and development of camp counselors by allowing them to be comfortable in the life stage of emerging adulthood.

The Role of Summer Camp in Emerging Adulthood Development

While the primary focus of camps is ultimately the well being of campers, counselors have the opportunity for transformation as well. A study done by Johnson and colleagues (2010), found “counselors recognized and discussed the role that being at camp had played in their identity development” (pg. 292-293). Former camp counselors believed past employment at camp had a direct connection in developing their “planning, decision making, communication and teamwork” skills (Garst et al., 2011, pg. 82). Being a member of a camp staff gives young adults the opportunity to learn through hands on experience (Garst, Franz, Baughman, & Peters, 2009).

Further, skills gained by camp staff members were found to last beyond the time during camp (Dahl, 2009). A study done at a 4-H camp in Louisiana suggested counselors believed they gained knowledge and abilities they would be able to apply to their lives outside of camp (Carter & Kotrlik, 2008). The counselors responded how they made advancements in building positive relationships, teamwork, and social skills, adult networks and social capital from working at camp (Carter & Kotrlik, 2008; Digby, 2005). Waskul (1998) contended counselors often saw a change in themselves such as accepting

others' differences, acquiring skills for work and school, and gaining increased self-esteem because of their experiences while at camp.

Camp has a clear, lasting impact on counselors, and returning counselors offer a wealth of knowledge, experience, and commitment to camp (Byrnes, 2004; Dahl, 2009). By increasing counselor retention at camp, it is possible that not only will the mission and energy at camp increase, but so will the long-term benefits for counselors. Emerging adulthood further explains could be enticing to this age group because camp is a short-term employment opportunity while providing life long skills (Arnett, 2000). Learning leadership, teamwork, communication, and many other benefits from working camp help prepare emerging adults for the job market, therefore helping them on their path to becoming adults (Carter & Kotrlik, 2008; Digby, 2005). Camp allows for a balance between kid-like play while at the same time taking on adult responsibilities of caring for campers (Johnson et al., 2010). For camp administrators, understanding all of these factors that influence emerging adults, may helpful in retaining more counselors from summer to summer.

Attachment to Camp

Counselors often provide a unique viewpoint about the camp experience. Johnson et al. (2010) sought to understand the growth of counselors' personal identity while working at various summer camps across the United States. In many of the interviews conducted, the phrase "camp bubble" was used by several of the participants. From follow up questions about the concept of a "camp bubble," Johnson et al. (2010) concluded several central concepts produced the idea of a 'camp bubble' which include:

“1) the physical and psychological separation of camp, (2) its organizational structure, (3) camp traditions, (4) camp activities, and (5) the establishment of a camp culture built around acceptance” (pg. 269). The previous ideas point to an attachment or bond to camp because of the unusual environment camp has. The idea of the “camp bubble” was reflected in another study done at an outdoor camp in Minnesota (Waskul, 1998). Many of the counselors referred to separation, traditions, and acceptance as major factors affected them during their time as a counselor (Waskul, 1998).

The uniqueness of the world of camp was also addressed by interviewing former camp counselors that had been away from camp for an extended period of time. Bialeschki and her colleagues (1998) asked them to reflect upon their experiences at camp (Bialeschki, Dahowski, & Henderson, 1998). Similarly, DeGraaf and Glover (2003) commented,

...the physical nature of camp served as its own distinct world, separate and unique from the outside world. Respondents refereed specifically to the departure from the day-to-day routine of life, and the ability to engage in activities different from those found the ‘normal world’, (pg. 14).

In addition, the DeGraaf and Glover (2003) identified a “strong loyalty” of the staff members to the camp, despite being away from camp for an extended period of time. The article pointed out by discovering what the long term benefits are from working at camp will give camp directors another tool to use in order to recruit and retain staff members (DeGraaf & Glover, 2003).

The research demonstrates the idea of camp as a treasured place is a common idea among camp staff. Feelings of connectedness are present a few months to several years after experiencing the role of a camp counselor. The “camp bubble” illustrates how counselors can identify that the camp itself provides a different environment (Johnson et al., 2010). Within the confines of the camp, there exists a different atmosphere and culture than the outside world.

Despite the findings that suggest that attachment is a pivotal part of the counselor experience, limited research has been done exploring how the attachments manifest, toward the goal of informing camp directors how to retain counselors from year to year (Bialeschki et al., 1998; DeGraaf & Glover, 2003; Garst et al., 2009; Waskul, 1998). Counselors are an essential part of the function of any summer camp program. They provide the supervision, leadership and energy that better serves camp (Byrnes, 2004). Place attachment theory (Beckley, Stedman, Wallace, & Ambard, 2007; Hidalgo & Hernandez, 2001; Kyle, Mowen, Tarrant, 2004; Manzo, 2006; Milligan, 1998; White & Green, 2010) has the potential to clarify one of the reasons why camp counselors are drawn back to camp for more than one summer of employment.

Theory of Place Attachment

From the concept of the “camp bubble” and along with the connections former camp counselors still feel to their camp long after they leave, place attachment theory (PAT) may explain these connections (Bialeschki et. al, 1998; DeGraaf & Glover, 2003; Johnson et al., 2010). Place attachment theory discuss how and why people develop emotional bonds to a physical place (Beckley, et al. 2007; Hidalgo & Hernandez, 2001;

Kyle, et al., 2004; Manzo, 2006; Milligan, 1998; White & Green, 2010). Typically, these attachments form because of interactions with a specific place. PAT has various sub-dimensions that allow the theory to envelope the different types or reasons individuals have to form bonds to a physical place. These sub-dimensions include place identity, place dependence, social bonding, and affective attachment (Kyle, et al., 2004).

The first two components of place attachment are place dependence and place identity. Place dependence explains an individual's bond with a place due to their interaction and fulfillment they get from a place. For instance, a person may find a specific lake to be special to them because of the large variety of fish the lake contains and therefore offers a good fishing experience (Williams & Roggenbuck, 1989; Kyle, in print). Where as place identity looks at the individual's personal identity formation within that location. Continuing with the lake example, a different individual may have spent hours fishing on this same lake learning patience, or responsibility and those experiences had a profound impact on their identity. The same lake hold different meanings for two different people, but they both have an attachment to that lake (Kyle, in print).

Affective attachment is another construct of PAT. The positive feelings associated in and for a specific place are typically cultivated due to a person's bond and interaction within the certain space (Jorgensen & Stedman, 2001). This was found to be true in a study analyzing homeowner's of lakeshore property (Jorgensen & Stedman, 2001). The more positive feelings a person had about their property the greater their attachment to it. Another example of this is a positive home environment. If an individual had loving, nurturing environment growing up, their attachment to their childhood home will be

strong (Milligan, 1998). Other examples may included places such as favorite vacation spots or national parks as places that may hold positive feelings or memories (Williams, Patterson, & Roggenbuck, 1992). Additionally, people that exhibit homesickness is another behavior that illustrates place attachment (Scannell & Gifford, 2010). The affective attachment an individual holds to a location influences their connection to the place.

The final part of place attachment is the social bonding dimension. Bonds between people often strengthen the attachment due to communication, support, and interpersonal relationships formed in a particular environment (Inalhan & Finch, 2004; Pretty, Chipuer, & Bramston, 2003). Hildalgo and Hernandez (2001) found that social attachments were stronger than physical attachments; however the two constructs most often depend on one another. This was also addressed in a study analyzing uses of Cleveland city parks, authors wrote that:

“If meaningful social relationships occur and are maintained in specific settings, then it should also be likely that these settings share some of this meaning given they provide the context for these relationships and shared experiences” (Kyle et al., 2004, pg. 443).

Social bonds within the context of the place allow for attachments to be made because the setting in which social bonds are cultivated are likely just as important as the social interactions itself (Scannell & Gifford, 2010).

Attachment to place can be generated through an emotional experience within a setting. These experiences can be through a short lived experience that a person deems as

profound or cultivated over the long term such as living in one place for an extended amount of time (Hidalgo & Hernandez, 2001). Research that has been conducted on camps discusses the memories and emotions counselors had tied to camp. Time at camp may only last for a couple months, perhaps even less, but it is clear that the place of camp holds attachments for many former counselors (Bialeschki et al., 1998; DeGraaf & Glover, 2003; Johnson et al., 2010).

Theory of Planned Behavior

While place attachment may play a role in the reasoning behind counselor's bond to camp, the theory of planned behavior (TPB) provides insight into the decision making process on whether to return or not. The TPB considers an individual's thought process about whether or not they will carry out an action. According to Ajzen (2002), various factors called behavioral beliefs, normative beliefs, and control beliefs influence the decision making process. Ajzen (2002) describes as the factors as:

...beliefs about the likely consequences or other attributes of the behavior (behavioral beliefs), beliefs about the normative expectations of other people (normative beliefs), and beliefs about the presence of factors that may further or hinder performance of the behavior (control beliefs)" (pg. 665).

The dynamics of the decision making process are vital to consider when evaluating if a camp counselor intends to return to camp for the following summer.

The theory of planned behavior has been used to predict employment in the health care system in the United Kingdom. By using a variety of variables including intention, attitude, subjective norms or opinions, perceived behavioral control, identification with

the specific employment, and moral obligation they were able to conclude that the theory of planned behavior was a viable measure if the perceived outcome action of the study's participant went ahead with their employment (Arnold, 2006). From these findings, it is clear that occupational choices can be somewhat measured through the theory of planned behavior. However, this theory has yet to be applied to a counselor's decision to return to camp the next summer.

Summary

Employee retention is an important subject for many companies and businesses, even the organized camp industry. Counselors that return to camp for more than one summer of employment offer great leadership, enthusiasm and knowledge to a camp's staff. Because these counselors often fall in the emerging adult phase of life, there are developmental and life changes occurring that could influence a decision to work camp for more than one summer in a row. Place attachment could be one of those influence and because of the lack of research into this field of study, understanding those influences could provide a useful resource to camp directors and administrators.

The purpose of this research is to find if there is a relationship between a counselor's place attachment to camp and an increased intent to return to that camp for another summer of employment.

Hypothesis 1: There will be a positive relationship as the number of years a counselor has worked at camp increases; so will their level of place attachment.

Hypothesis 2: There will be a positive relationship as a camp counselor's level of place attachment increases; so will their level of intent to return to camp next summer.

Hypothesis 3: The demographics of age and gender will play a role in the relationship on place attachment and intent to return.

- a. There will be a negative relationship between the age of the counselor and their intent to return.
- b. There will be no relationship between gender and intent to return and/or place attachment.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODS

The purpose of this research is to find if there is a relationship between a counselor's place attachment to camp and an increased intent to return to that camp for another summer of employment. Studies on camp counselors have shown that counselors have loyalty to the camp they were employed at years after being away from that particular camp (Johnson et al., 2010). However, there has not been a study exploring what encourages retention among counselors. This study examines the role of place attachment to a camp in a counselors' intention to return. A quantitative survey will be used to determine the relationship between a camp counselors place attachment to camp and their intent to return for another summer of work. The methods for this study will be presented in three parts: 1) Sample Recruitment and Data Collection, 2) Operationalization, and 3) Data Analysis.

Sample Recruitment and Data Collection

The subjects for this study were recruited through a collaboration between the researcher and the American Camp Association (ACA). The ACA selected and provided the researcher with a list of 50 residential summer camps with contact information of someone employed with each camp. The researcher initially contacted the camps through camp directors or administrators via email, describing the study and requesting the help of the camp to contact their counselors and staff who worked during the summer of 2012. The researcher also recruited camps through phone calls to camps in order to recruit more camps to participate in the study. Once a representative from the camp

replied back to the initial email showing interest in the study, the researcher further explained the study. In order to establish a response rate, the researcher requested the participating camps provide the number of counselors they would be emailing. An appropriate response rate for this study would be 53%, based upon prior research using online surveys of camp counselors (McCole et al., 2012).

After this information was collected, the research provided a short email to the camp representative to send to their summer staff. This email for the summer staff contained a summary of the research and a link to the online survey through SurveyMonkey.com. The camp representative then forwarded the email and link to their 2012 staff and the staff members could then choose to participate in the study. As an incentive for counselors to participate, counselors could opt to include their email at the end of the survey to be entered in a drawing for one of three, \$25 Visa gift cards. Study participants were delimited to those having finished at least one summer of employment at camp during the 2012 summer. The sample size goal was approximately 300 participants. Study participants will be between the ages of 18 to 25 to reflect those who are a part of the emerging adulthood age range (Arnett, 2000). Participants also need to have worked during the 2012 summer at camp. A total of 859 counselors were emailed and 223 questionnaires were completed making the response rate to 25.9%.

Operationalization

Data was collected by means of a self-administered questionnaire consistent of three parts: 1) Demographics and Camp Experience, 2) Place Attachment, and 3) Intent to Return.

Demographics and Camp Experience

Participants were asked their age, gender, current occupation, employment outside of camp, and how many summers they have worked at that camp. Survey participants were not asked to provide any identifying factors that would affect their privacy or impact their employment status at their camp.

Place Attachment

Place attachment was measured using a modified version of the Place Attachment Scale (PAS) developed by (Kyle et al., 2004). The PAS was designed to measure an individual's attachment to a specific location. For this study, Kyle and his colleagues measured the attachment to Cleveland Metroparks through the parks users. The scale consists of four subscales: (1) place identity, (2) place dependence (3) affective attachment and (4) social bonding.

The PAS was modified to fit the scope of the study. The questions were based upon a 5-point Likert-type scale from "Strongly Disagree" (1) to "Strongly Agree" (5) will be used. The original scale contained the following examples of each of the place attachment subscales: "I enjoy visiting Cleveland Metroparks more than any other sites. (place dependence). I am very attached to Cleveland Metroparks (affective attachment). I feel Cleveland Metroparks is a part of me (place identity). If I were to stop visiting Cleveland Metroparks' sites, I would lose contact with a number of friends (social bonding)" (Kyle et. al, 2004, pg. 446). For the purposes of this study, questions were modified to fit the scope of the study. For example, in the original scale, the question

was” I feel Cleveland Metroparks is a part of me” has been modified to “I feel that camp is a part of me” will be implemented. The changes to the scale were reviewed by Kyle (personal communication, July 16, 2012) to establish content validity.

Kyle et. al (2004) reported internal consistencies for each subscale with Chronbach’s alpha’s between .63- .90. When this original scale was used, each of the subscales were found to have the following reliabilities: place dependence $\alpha = .90$, affective attachment of $\alpha = .84$, place identity $\alpha = .81$, and social bonding $\alpha = .63$ (Kyle et al, 2004). For this study, Cronchbach’s alphas for overall place attachment and each of the subscales were found to be overall place attachment $\alpha = .87$, place dependence $\alpha = .63$, place identity $\alpha = .89$, social bonding $\alpha = .57$, and affective attachment $\alpha = .84$.

Intent to Return

Items that focused on intent to return to camp were based upon intention scales used in theory of planned behavior studies (Becker, Randall, & Riegel, 1995; Rhodes & Courneya, 2003; Terry, Hogg, & White, 1999). In each of these studies, three questions were used based on a Likert –type from scale where 1 is “extremely unlikely” and 7 is “extremely likely.” For example, Becker and colleagues (1995) used the following questions:

- (1) I intend to be on time to work every shift that I work.
- (2) How likely is it that you will be on time to work every shift that you work?”
- (3) I very much want to be on time to work every shift that I work” (pg 624-625).

Becker (1995) reported internal consistencies for each subscale with Chronbach’s alpha’s between .63 - .83. The questions were modified to fit the scope of the study as follows:

- (1) I intend to work at camp next summer.
- (2) How likely is it that you will work for camp next summer?
- (3) I very much want to work for camp next summer.

The same 7- point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 is “extremely unlikely” and 7 is “extremely likely” was used in this study. For this study, Chronbach’s alpha for this study was found to be $\alpha = .89$.

Data Analysis

Data was analyzed using a statistical analysis program, SPSS 20.0. For the first hypothesis: There is a positive relationship as the number of years worked at camp increase; so will the level of place attachment, a linear regression test was used. Since the independent (number of years worked) and dependent (level of place attachment) variables were on an interval scale, data analysis using a regression test will be utilized.

The second hypothesis proposes there will be a positive relationship in the level of place attachment among counselors who intend to return to camp next summer. Since the second hypothesis had independent (place attachment) and dependent (intent to return) variables, this hypothesis was again tested using a regression test because each variable were based on an interval scale.

For the final hypothesis, each sub-hypothesis were analyzed differently according to their variable. A linear regression test was used to find the relationship between age of the counselor (independent variable) and intent to return (dependent variable) for sub-hypothesis 3a. For the sub-hypothesis 3b, the independent variable (gender) and dependent variables of intent to return and place attachment was tested using an

independent t-Test.

Summary

The purpose of this research is to examine if there a connection between a counselor's place attachment to camp and their intent to return to the same camp for another summer of employment. From the survey methods of this study and analyzing the data, the hypotheses will be proven or disproven which will allow further insight on counselor retention for summer camps.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

The purpose of this chapter is to provide information on the 1) Treatment of the Data, 2) Description of the Sample Population, 3) Measurement Scales, and 4) Hypothesis Testing.

Treatment of the Data

For this study the data was analyzed using a variety of statistical tests. Data was cleaned by eliminating any survey in which the survey respondent did not meet either the age requirements for this survey, 18 – 25, or their last summer worked at camp was prior to 2012. Missing data items were removed responses that were less than one. The data set was coded for each question and/or scale and the scales were tested for internal reliability. One item within the Place Attachment Scale was recoded because it was originally negatively coded. Statistical significance was determined using a .05 level for all tests. A total of 223 surveys were collected. Some (n=51) surveys had to be eliminated because the participant did not meet the age and employment delimitations established for the study. Following this treatment, the statistic test had an n of 172.

Description of the Sample Population

The mean age of the participants was 20. Each age level was represented in this sample. Each subject indicated they were either a counselor or activity specialist at the camp they worked during the summer of 2012. Study participants were asked various questions about their camp history. The mean age of survey participants was 21. Over half, 66.3%, of the sample population was female. On average, respondents had worked

at camp for 2 years. For this study, camp sessions were on average 8 – 10 days in length and counselors were at camp for a mean of 7 weeks in the summer. A total of 133 survey participants attended camp between the ages of 5 and 18. Of that 133, 44.8% said the camp they work at is the camp they attended as a child. A breakdown of the study participants' demographics and their camp history is provided in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1 Demographic Profile of Participants and Their Camp Experience		
Demographic Information	Frequency	Percentage
Gender (n = 172)		
Male	56	33.7%
Female	114	66.3%
Age (n = 172)		
18	22	12.8%
19	29	16.9%
20	32	18.6%
21	24	14.0%
22	27	15.7%
23	24	14.0%
24	8	4.7%
25	6	3.5%
How many years did you work at the camp from which you received this survey? (n=172)		
1	65	37.8%
2	39	22.7%
3	34	19.8%
4	22	12.8%
5	8	4.7%
6	3	1.7%
7 or more years	1	.6%
Were you a camp counselor (looks after the care and supervision of the campers while at camp)? (n = 172)		
Yes (1)	161	93.6%
No (2)	11	6.4%
Where you an activity specialist (leader or instructor of activities at camp, ex: archery, canoeing, arts and crafts, lifeguard, etc.) at your camp? (n = 172)		
Yes (1)	113	65.7%
No (2)	59	34.3%

Table 4.1 Demographic Profile of Participants and Their Camp Experience		
Demographic Information	Frequency	Percentage
Did you attend a camp between the ages of 5 and 18? (n = 172)		
Yes (1)	133	77.3%
No (2)	39	22.7%
Follow up to question above: If you answered “yes” to, is the camp you worked at the same camp you attended? (n = 134)		
Yes (1)	77	44.8%
No (2)	57	33.1%
At the camp where you worked, how many days did a camp session last? (n = 172)		
3 -4	3	1.7%
5	15	9.3%
6-7	73	42.4%
8-10	13	7.6%
11 – 14	46	26.7%
15-21	1	.6%
22+	20	11.6%
How many weeks were you at camp? This included training and when campers were at camp. Round up to the nearest week. (n = 172)		
1	21	12.2%
2	13	7.6%
3	1	.6%
5	8	4.7%
6	4	2.3%
7	12	7.0%
8	20	11.6%
9+	93	54.1%

Measurement Scales

This study found independent response for place attachment ranged from 2.44 to 5.00 out of a possible score of 1.00 to 5.00, where 1.00 represented the lowest level of place attachment. The overall place attachment scale had a mean of 66.38, place dependence scored a mean = 15.95, place identity had a mean = 17.89, social bonding's mean = 14.67, and affective attachment 15.04. Reliability, mean, standard deviation and distributions are represented in Table 4.2.

Table 4.2 Place Attachment Item Analysis							
Item	Strongly Disagree (1) freq./%	Disagree (2) freq./%	Neutral (3) freq./%	Agree (4) freq./%	Strongly Agree (5) freq./%	Mean	Std. Dev.
Place Dependence $\alpha = .63$							
Camp is much better suited for camp counselors than other camps.	2/ 1.2%	6/ 3.5%	53/ 30.8%	60/ 34.9%	46/ 26.7%	3.81	.91
I prefer camp's setting and facilities over other camps.	1/ .6%	2/ 1.2%	23/ 13.4%	67/ 39.0%	74/ 43.0%	4.26	.78
For the job of camp counselor, I could not imagine anything better than the settings and facilities at camp.	0/ 0%	17/ 9.9%	40/ 23.3%	62/ 36.0%	48/ 27.9%	3.84	.95
Because of camp's settings and facilities, I enjoy working at camp more than any other camp.	1/ 0.6%	4/ 2.3%	47/ 27.3%	59/ 34.3%	55/ 32.0%	3.98	.87

Table 4.2 Place Attachment Item Analysis

Item	Strongly Disagree (1) freq./%	Disagree (2) freq./%	Neutral (3) freq./%	Agree (4) freq./%	Strongly Agree (5) freq./%	Mean	Std. Dev.
Place Identity $\alpha = .89$							
I feel camp is a part of me.	1/ .6%	5/ 2.9%	11/ 6.4%	43/ 25.0%	107/ 62.2%	4.49	.79
I identify strongly with camp.	0/ 0%	3/ 1.7%	12/ 7.0%	55/ 32.0%	97/ 56.4%	4.47	.71
Camp is a part of me.	1/ .6%	4/ 2.3%	11/ 6.4%	44/ 25.6%	107/ 62.2%	4.51	.77
Working at camp says a lot about who I am.	0/ 0%	6/ 3.5%	10/ 5.8%	61/ 35.5%	90/ 52.3%	4.41	.76
Social Bonding $\alpha = .57$							
I associate special people in my life with camp.	0/ 0%	5/ 2.9%	10/ 5.8%	57/ 33.1%	95/ 55.2%	4.45	.74
My friends/ family would be disappointed if I left camp.	6/ 3.5%	34/ 19.8%	42/ 24.4%	49/ 28.5%	35/ 20.3%	3.43	1.14
If I were to stop working at camp, I would lose contact with a number of friends.	16/ 9.3%	51/ 29.7%	42/ 24.4%	42/ 24.4%	16/ 9.3%	2.95	1.15
Many of my friends/family prefer camp over other camps.	0/ 0%	6/ 3.5%	69/ 40.1%	39/ 22.7%	53/ 30.8%	3.83	.92

Table 4.2 Place Attachment Item Analysis

Item	Strongly Disagree (1) freq./%	Disagree (2) freq./%	Neutral (3) freq./%	Agree (4) freq./%	Strongly Agree (5) freq./%	Mean	Std. Dev.
Affective Attachment $\alpha = .84$							
Camp means a lot to me.	0/ 0%	2/ 1.2%	9/ 5.2%	34/ 19.8%	122/ 70.9%	4.65	.63
I feel a strong sense of belonging to camp and its settings/facilities.	0/ 0%	9/ 5.2%	10/ 5.8%	57/ 33.1%	91/ 52.9%	4.37	.82
I am very attached to camp.	0 /0%	10/ 5.8%	15/ 8.7%	55/ 32.0%	87/ 50.6%	4.31	.87
I have little, if any, emotional attachment to camp and it's setting/facilities. (recoded item)	102/ 59.3%	39/ 22.7%	8/ 4.7%	9/ 5.2%	8/ 4.7%	1.68	1.11

- On a 1 – 5 scale, $\alpha = .87$ Mean = 66.37 Standard Deviation 8.32

For intention to return, an overall scale was developed from independent responses ranging from 1.00 to 7.00 out of a possible 1.00 to 7.00. The reliability, mean, and standard deviation are represented in Table 4.3.

Table 4.3 Intent to Return Item Analysis									
Item**	SD (1) freq./ %	(2) freq./ %	(3) freq./ %	N (4) freq./ %	(5) freq./ %	(6) freq./ %	SA (7) freq./%	M.	St.D
I intend to work at the same camp next summer.	17/ 9.9%	12/ 7.0%	7/ 4.1%	18/ 10.5%	17/ 9.9%	16/ 9.3%	78/ 45.3%	5.21	2.13
I very much want to be working at camp again next summer.	3/1.7%	6/ 3.5%	4/ 2.3%	12/ 7.0%	15/ 8.7%	21/ 12.2 %	104/ 60.5%	6.08	1.51
** Legend: SD = Strongly Disagree; N= Neutral; SA = Strongly Agree; M = Mean St. D = Standard Deviation									

Table 4.3 Intent to Return Item Analysis: continued									
Item**	EU (1) freq./%	(2) freq./ %	(3) freq./ %	N (4) freq./%	(5) freq./ %	(6) freq./ %	EL (7) freq./%	M.	St. D.
How likely is it that you will work at the same camp next summer?	17/ 9.9%	14/ 8.1%	8 /4.7%	13/7.6 %	16/9.3 %	16/ 9.3%	81/ 47.1%	5.23	2.17
** Legend: EU = Extremely Unlikely; N = Neutral; SA = Strongly Agree; M = Mean St. D = Standard Deviation									
*On a 1 – 7 scale α = .89 Mean = 16.53 Standard Deviation 5.27									

Hypothesis Testing

The first hypothesis for the study proposed that the data will show a positive relationship as the number of years a counselor has worked at camp increases; so will their level of place attachment. To analyze this hypothesis, a simple linear regression analysis was performed with number of years worked at camp as the independent variable and place attachment as the dependent variable. The number of years worked at camp was determined to be 2.36 years for this sample population. The mean score for place attachment was found to be 4.14.

Results of the regression showed that there was a significant relationship between the number of years a counselor has worked at camp and their level of place attachment ($P = .001$). The test assessed changes in the dependent variable of place attachment, based on a standard change in the independent variable of years worked at camp. A summary of these findings are listed in Table 4.4.

Table 4.4: Summary of Regression Analysis for the Relationship between Number of Years Worked at Camp and Place Attachment			
Variable	<u>B</u>	<u>p-value</u>	Beta
(Constant)	3.84		
Years Worked at Camp	.13	< .001	.343
Place Attachment			
$R = .343$; $R^2 = .118$ * $p = < .001$; DV = Place Attachment			

The second hypothesis proposed that the data will show a positive relationship between a camp counselor's level of place attachment and their level of intent to return to camp. This hypothesis was also tested using a linear regression using place attachment as the independent variable and intent to return as the dependent variable. Place attachment

mean = 4.14 with a standard deviation of .52 and the mean score of intent to return = 5.52 with a standard deviation of 1.75. As a counselor's level of place attachment increased by one unit, intent to return rose by 1.3. A summary of this hypothesis test can be found in Table 4.5.

Table 4.5: Summary of Linear Regression Analysis for the Relationship between Place Attachment and Intent to Return			
Variable	B	p-value	Beta
(Constant)	.048	.963	
Place Attachment	1.322	< .001	.393
Intent to Return			
R = .393; R ² = .154; *p = <.001; DV = Intent to Return			

For the third hypothesis, we predicted that age and gender will play a role in the relationship between on place attachment and intent to return, proposing two sub-hypotheses, hypotheses 3a and 3b. For hypothesis 3a, we predicted a negative relationship between the age of the counselor and their intent to return. This hypothesis was analyzed using a simple linear regression using age as in independent variable and intent to return as the dependent variable. The mean age was found to be 4.8 with a standard deviation of 1.93. Means were calculated for age using 1 – 9; 1 = 18, and 9 = 25. Descriptive statistics for intent to return the mean = 5.51 with a standard deviation of 1.76. Intent to return was evaluated on a 7-point scale.

The findings for hypothesis 3a suggested no relationship between a counselor's age and their intent to return. The B constant was determined to be 5.38 while age had a B of .028 and a β = .030. This linear regression test found that R = .030, R² = .001, and p = .699. For the second sub-hypothesis, an independent t-Test was conducted to test

hypothesis 3b in which gender was the independent variable and intent to return and place attachment was the dependent variable. There was not a significant difference between genders for intent to return or place attachment. Results of the independent samples t-Test are presented in Table 4.6.

Table 4.6: Independent t-Test Analysis for the Relationship Between Survey Participant Gender and Intent to Return/ Place Attachment						
Variable	Males Mean	Females Mean	Male St. Dev.	Female St. Dev.	t	p
Intent to Return	5.47	5.53	1.804	1.743	-.208	.83
Place Attachment	4.07	4.18	.502	.526	-1.34	.17

n/s = not significant

Summary

The results of the data analysis demonstrated a relationship between the variables in the first and second hypothesis. The number of years worked at camp had a great impact on the level of place attachment and place attachment had a significant relationship with intent to return on counselors. For the third hypothesis, both sub-hypothesis showed no significant relationship between the demographic variables and place attachment or intent to return. The results of these tests will be further discussed in chapter five.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study was to examine if there is a relationship between a counselor's place attachment to camp and their intent to return to camp for subsequent summers of employment. This study also focused on how the length of employment, or number of summers worked at camp, affected counselors' place attachment levels. Finally, this study examined how demographics impact intent to return and place attachment. The information in this chapter will be presented in the following order: 1) Summary of the Procedures, 2) Summary of Findings, 3) Discussion 5) Limitations, and 6) Implications and Recommendations for Further Studies.

Summary of Procedures

The researcher worked with the American Camp Association (ACA) to find a sample population for this study. From a list provided by the ACA, the research contacted 50 residential camps via email. The email contained information about the study and requested a response from the camp director if they were interested in participating in the study. The camp directors who agreed to pass the study along to their counselors were asked to provide the number of staff members who would be emailed so the researcher could establish a response rate. After this information was collected, the researcher provided the contact person with a short email containing the link to the online survey that could be sent to the 2012 summer staff. The link contained information about participating in the study, such as possible risks, benefits, and clarification that the

counselors' consent to participate was optional. The survey consisted of three sections: 1) demographics and camp experience, 2) place attachment, and 3) intent to return to camp.

The total sample consisted of 172 responses. This included males and females, ages 18–25 who had worked at camp during the summer of 2012. The place attachment scale was modified from its original use to fit the scope of this study (Kyle et al., 2004). A scale for intent to return was created for this study by mirroring similar phrases in a study that used intention as part of a planned behavior study (Becker, Randall, & Riegel, 1995).

Summary of Findings

Three hypotheses were established to frame the study. The first hypothesis proposed there would be a positive relationship between the counselor's experience and their place attachment: as the number of years a counselor has worked at camp increases, so will their level of place attachment. The second hypothesis was that there would be a positive relationship between the counselor's place attachment and intent to return: as a camp counselor's level of place attachment increases, so would his or her level of intent to return to camp the following summer. The final hypothesis focused on demographics of age and gender and their role in the relationship between place attachment and intent to return. This hypothesis had two sub-components: a) there would be a negative relationship between the age of the counselor and his or her intent to return, and b) there would be no relationship between gender and intent to return and/or place attachment.

The first hypothesis was tested using linear regression, which indicated there was a positive relationship between the number of years worked at camp and a counselor's

place attachment to camp within the sample population. A linear regression was also used to test the second hypothesis. Results showed that for this sample population, there was a positive relationship between place attachment and intent to return. Using linear regression, the first sub-component of the third hypothesis found no significant relationship between age and intent to return within this sample population. An independent T-test was performed to analyze the second sub-component of the third hypothesis and it was determined that there was no significant relationship between gender and intent to return or gender and place attachment for this sample population.

Discussion

A limited number of studies have looked at the topic of counselor retention in camp. One study found that sense of community played a role in counselor retention (McCole et al., 2012), while another study looked at job satisfaction among counselors and how it impacted retention (Becker, 1983). The present study focused on a different element of counselor retention through place attachment and how it impacts counselors' intent to return. The findings provide support to elements of previous studies conducted on camp counselors and opens doors for future research.

The results showed a strong relationship between place attachment and intent to return. This finding is consistent with the camp literature that discusses counselors' bonds to camp many years after they stopped working at camp. Many studies looked at camp counselors and how the camp experience impacted them long term (Carter & Kotrlík, 2008; Dahl, 2009; Digby, 2005; Garst et al., 2009; Johnson et al., 2010; Waskul, 1998). A "strong loyalty" of the staff members was identified even years after no longer working at

camp (DeGraaf & Glover, 2003). Camp is also described as a “bubble” in one article written by Johnson et al. (2010). It went on to further explain that camp is a different world due to its physically separate setting from the rest of the world and its unique culture (Johnson, et al., 2010). The article described camps as, “where participants in the study had worked were located ‘off the beaten path.’ Being physically far away from ‘civilization’ certainly contributed to the sense of separation that many counselors in this study felt at camp” (Johnson et al., 2010, pg. 269). Garst et al. (2009) supported this concept of a bond with camp by explaining how traditions specific to that camp promote a counselor’s “connection to the camp community” (pg. 10). If camp is a unique environment, then it is possible that this is where the place dependence component of place attachment fits within camp. Place dependence focuses on the fulfillment an individual gets from a specific place (Kyle, in print; Williams & Roggenbuck, 1989;). With the distinct culture of traditions through songs and rituals, counselors’ place dependence for camp could be formed because they cannot get those experiences outside of camp.

This study was also designed to explore if a relationship existed between the length of time a counselor was employed at camp and their level of place attachment. The data supported this idea and mirrored concepts within the workplace attachment and employee retention literature. Employees who had worked longer with a company or organization were more likely to stay in that position as long as the component of a strong social workgroup was present (Kuipers, 2009; Sheridan, 1992).

While many employee retention studies have focused on the importance of workgroups and/or relationships among employees to retaining staff (Kuipers, 2009; Riketta, & Dick, 2005; Sheridan, 1992), the data in this study did not support this notion. The social bonding dimension of place attachment within this study had the lowest significance level of the four subscales. This outcome was somewhat surprising, considering many of the studies conducted on camp counselors identify the importance of relationships with one another and with campers as a significant part of the camp experience. There are several elements of personal growth outcomes that counselors experience from working at camp, such as teamwork, communication, and social capital, which are all socially based (Carter & Kotrlik, 2008; Digby, 2005; Garst et al., 2009, Johnson et al., 2011). Due to the social aspects of camp being a common finding in previous studies focusing on counselors, we expected to see the same phenomenon in this study. It is likely the social bonding element was not as important because while the relationships and social aspects of camp were common occurrences, specific relationships or friendships may not be as important as the culture of camp, which drives those relationships.

This idea that relationships are developed during camp can be related back to the specific environment of camp and why it fosters relationships. However, it is possible that the items within the place attachment scale used to measure social bonding do not fit the scope of this study or that they do not adequately measure social bonding within place attachment. Within the original use of the scale (Kyle et al., 2004), the reliability of the social bonding subscale was acceptable ($\alpha = .63$), while the current study social

bonding's reliability was questionable ($\alpha = .57$). Social bonding looks at the emotional attachments formed within a setting of place. Those bonds are then projected onto a place, and hypothetically, an attachment forms. It is possible the modifications of these scale items were inadequate for the context of this study. Two items used in this scale focused on opinions and/or feelings of friends and family. A study conducted by Johnson et al. (2010) established that counselors may separate camp friends and non-camp friends, saying, "those who were not 'camp people' just did not understand" (pg. 270). Survey participants may have misinterpreted these items because "friends" did not separate camp friends from non-camp friends. The items focusing on friends and family may need to be more specific within the context of this study and include fellow counselors and/or campers to gain a better understanding of the social bonding element occurring at camp.

With regards to the findings on the affective attachment sub-dimension of place attachment, counselors may bond to camp due to a variety of factors. Counselors have the opportunity to behave like kids while still taking on the responsibilities of an adult (Johnson et al., 2010). This kid-like play allows counselors to be "ridiculous" while still maintaining responsibility for campers and could account for the positive feelings associated with camp (Johnson et al., 2010, pg. 290). While the role of counselor adds to the affective attachment developed within the counselors, the activities that counselors facilitate such as songs, traditions, games, and other rituals may also provide opportunities for those bonds to be made to camp. The role of counselor and the uniqueness of the camp environment, discussed previously as a factor to counselors'

place dependence in camp, may have similar effects to counselors' affective attachments to camp.

Emerging adulthood may provide a further understanding of the place identity component of place attachment that occurred in counselors. The role as counselor has been shown to develop counselors in areas such as teamwork, leadership, communication, social networking, and others (Carter & Kotrlik, 2008; Digby, 2005; Garst et al., 2009). Place identity focuses on an individual's development within a particular location and how an attachment forms to a specific place because of the identity development that happened there (Kyle, in print). Emerging adults are described as 18-25 year olds who are seeking life changes and self-discovery (Arnett, 2000). Camp may facilitate outcomes such as teamwork, leadership, and communication because of the structure imposed by rules and expectations for the counselors, while still providing challenges and opportunities for learning and growth through various experiences at camp (Carter & Kotrlik, 2008; Digby, 2005; Garst et al., 2009). A previous study stated, "the emerging adults in this study described engaging in identity exploration through the roles and responsibilities at the camps where they worked" (Johnson et al., 2010, pg. 389). Since counselors have been shown previously in other studies to be experiencing personal development within camp, it might provide insight to why, in this study, the place identity subscale had the largest significance value ($\alpha = .89$) out of the four place attachment subscales.

The third hypothesis for this study predicted that age would have a negative impact on intent to return to camp within counselors. Arnett (2000; 2006) discusses that

during college, emerging adults will spend their summers seeking out different opportunities such as traveling or short-term work experiences that help them prepare for a future career. The theory posits that around the age of 25, individuals could begin moving into more of an adulthood stage (Arnett, 2000). However, the findings of this study suggest that age does not have a significant role in intent to return to camp. It is possible that within this sample population there are extrinsic factors that may increase counselors' intent to return, which would explain why age played such a small role.

While emerging adults may return to the same camp because of its traditions and culture, camp also provides a changing atmosphere because the experiences are never the same from one summer to the next. Counselors may lead similar activities summer-to-summer, but with new staff and campers, the types of experiences change every summer. This may explain why the age of counselors does not impact their intent to return. It is also possible that the role of a camp counselor perpetuates the emerging adulthood developmental stage because enjoying the role of both child and adult as counselors allows them to remain in limbo between adolescence and adulthood (Johnson et al., 2010).

The final hypothesis predicted that gender would not play a role in place attachment or intent to return. It was speculated that gender would not impact either variable, and from the data of this sample population this remained to be true. Within the place attachment literature, findings of overall place attachment levels are not significantly different between males and females (Lewicka, 2005; Rollero & De Piccoli, 2010). Since place attachment does not appear to differ between genders, both male and female counselors are equally able to form attachments to camp.

Limitations

Within the confines of this study, there are limitations that need to be taken into account when considering the results. First, the timing of this study may have affected the responses of the counselors. Surveys were collected from late November 2012 through the end of January 2013. While this is normally the time period during which camps begin recruiting staff for the upcoming summer, counselors who were considering returning may not have had to make a definite decision about their intentions for the upcoming summer yet. Therefore, intent to return may have been measured higher because they had not yet actually committed to the reality of going back and were speaking purely in terms of intention.

This study was conducted online, which is another limitation of this research. If study participants had any questions about the survey or the study, they were not able to talk to the researcher. Once participants agreed to participate in the survey, the survey was set up so the counselors were required to answer each question before moving on in order to gain a strong survey response. If a participant did not want to answer a specific question, they had to choose between answering and opting out of the survey altogether. This may have impacted the accuracy of the responses.

There were some interesting outcomes from the data collected from this sample population that may present limitations to this study. Of the total sample population, 77.3% had attended camp sometime between the ages of 5 and 18. Of that 77.3%, 44.8% worked at the camp they attended. This sample population had ties to camp prior to becoming an employee. With such a large portion of the sample population of counselors

already having had experience at camp, it could be possible those counselors' attachments to camp were already established prior to working at camp. If attachments were already present from experiences as a camper, those individuals who moved on to a counselor position may have a further influence on their intent to return.

The sample population is also not an adequate representative sample of the counselors that work every summer. While the camps that were contacted were randomly selected, not every camp participated. In addition, the counselors who participated in the survey may have high place attachment. If a counselor is highly attached to camp, they may be more likely to respond to their camp director's email asking them to participate in this voluntary study versus counselors that have low attachment.

Implications and Recommendations for Further Research

The findings of this study have the potential to have an effect on the professional camping world. It brings another perspective on why camp counselors return to camp for more than one summer of employment. While place attachment is not the only contributing factor, it adds another piece to the puzzle regarding a very important piece of the camp experience.

Other articles on place attachment have made suggestions about how to facilitate attachment in tourists (Hwang, Lee, & Chen, 2005; Alexandris, Kouthouris & Meligdis, 2005). While their recommendations are modeled after increasing tourists to national parks and ski resorts, the basic concepts can apply to camps. Hwang (2005) stated, "high involvement tourists deeply care about the national parks. Therefore, they become loyal visitors" (pg. 154–155.) Increasing involvement for counselors is one way camp directors

can help increase place attachment. Involvement can occur in a few different ways. Providing opportunities for counselors to take ownership in camp through opportunities such as brainstorming ideas for new activities or teaching songs, discussing the importance of taking care of the physical setting of camp through keeping it clean by picking up litter, treating equipment and facilities with respect, and becoming more involved with camp, therefore increasing the likelihood of forming place attachment (Alexandris et al., 2005). Ownership may be developed by allowing counselors to be more involved in the planning of camp and offering opportunities for improving camp programming, such as making up activities or songs.

Another suggestion to increase involvement made by Hwang (2005) was through the use of emails from the camp director or social media, such as a Facebook page that highlights current and past images of camp, allowing counselors to connect during the off season. Special events could also increase involvement if counselors had the opportunity to come back to camp for events such as a winter retreat or spring clean up (Alexandris et al., 2005). A specific example of this could be a staff alumni event during the year where counselors from current and previous summers could return to camp for a getaway weekend. Since camp provides a unique environment by promoting opportunities for staff to return during the off season, it may allow their place dependence on camp to increase because of the special experiences they have while at camp.

Sharing experiences is also a way that attachment to camp could be facilitated. Hwang (2005) discussed how information about the park should link to tourists' "life experiences" and how this strategy would allow visitors to build a connection to the park

(pg. 152). Returning counselors could share experiences with new counselors and discuss how a certain spot on camp holds special meaning to them, or camp directors could allow time for counselors to reflect on what place in camp means the most to them. Current counselors could also be asked to reflect on their experiences during camp. Reflecting on their experiences within the place of camp may allow counselors to then have deeper meaning attached to the place. One specific example of this may be to develop personal goals and evaluations throughout the summer. Counselors may set goals for themselves at the start of camp and then review how they are doing in the middle and again at the close of camp. This could be done individually or with a fellow counselor or supervisor to help provide feedback. If counselors can reflect on their growth while still at camp, they may be more likely to attribute the changes to camp and therefore increase the likelihood that place identity to camp would form. Further research could be done to evaluate if these strategies increase place attachment within counselors. While understanding that place attachment impacts intent to return is valuable, understanding how to increase place attachment within counselors may provide camp directors improved ability to increase retention rates in summer staff members.

Affective attachment had the second highest significance level of .83 within the place attachment scale. Because these items look primarily at the positive feelings and emotions associated with a place, this is important to camp directors. Byrnes (2004) discussed a similar concept by explaining various ways that camp directors could make their current staff feel valued at camp. Some of the suggestions made included providing opportunities like celebrating birthdays, encouraging staff to be creative and take

ownership of their camp, and showing appreciation with a nice space to relax or small gifts (Byrnes, 2004). If the physical appearance of camp is a welcoming environment and its facilities are adequate for conducting the activities of camp, then it is more likely that counselors will form attachment (Alexandris et al., 2005). If a camp director can facilitate occasions for increased positive feelings within camp, there could be a greater likelihood of affective attachment, and in turn, place attachment may increase.

Understanding counselors' place attachment to camp provides insight to how and why they are forming bonds to the place of camp. The other part of this study was looking at their intent to return through the lens of the theory of planned behavior. Since this theory provides insight to the thought process of an individual carrying out a specific action, it may allow camps to better predict if their counselors will follow through with their action of returning to camp (Ajzen, 2002). For the purposes of this study, only the intention part of the theory of planned behavior was operationalized. However, there are more pieces to this theory that may provide deeper insight to counselors and retention rates. The factors, which impact an individuals' decision-making, include behavioral beliefs, normative beliefs, and control beliefs (Ajzen, 2002). Behavior beliefs in counselors may present themselves when deciding how returning to camp may impact counselors further. Counselors could be utilizing the normative beliefs of other counselors and how their fellow staff members may expect them to return to camp or what kind of thoughts or feelings of friends and family outside of camp have about their return to camp. Control beliefs look at what extrinsic variables may aide or negatively impact one's ability to carry out a decision (Ajzen, 2002). Returning counselors may

have to weigh factors such as college classes and finances when deciding to return for another summer. While place attachment and intent to return were shown to have a relationship in this study, the theory of planned behavior may help explain counselor retention and give further insight into counselor intention, which may help camp administrators to better predict retention rates.

Place attachment may explain why counselors return to camp, and it has the potential to build a greater insight of counselor retention for camp professionals. This empirical study of place attachment creates further questions as to what other roles place attachment has for camps. A deeper understanding of why counselors are coming back to camp still needs to be answered. Directions for a qualitative study may be necessary in order to gain a better understanding of why the place or setting of camp is so important to counselors or to uncover other dimensions that might play a role. A qualitative study may also provide more information on why social bonding did not play a significant role within this study. Place attachment may also be used to better understand why campers return to camp, and potentially take on jobs as counselors later on in life.

For camp administrators, this research has implications for camp as a business. If camps can facilitate place attachment within their counselors, there is a possibility that staff retention rates could increase. Returning counselors offer experience and leadership to camp. For parents/guardians looking for a camp for their children, knowing the percentage of returning staff members could be valuable information when choosing a camp. A staff with more training and experience reflects a higher quality organization, and for parents/guardians, knowing a camp has a high percentage of returning counselors

may influence their decision of where to send their child to camp. In addition, camps may be able to improve and strengthen programming, which could influence more campers to attend and return to camp. This information could eventually prove useful for not only retaining but recruiting staff as well. If counselors have a high place attachment to camp, which then leads to a higher retention rate, camp administrators may be able to use this information to show new staff how valuable an experience working at camp may be to them.

APPENDICES

Appendix A

Institutional Review Board Exempt Review Application

Exempt Review Application
Clemson University (CU) Institutional Review Board (IRB) (**Version 9.7.2012**)
[Clemson University IRB Website](#)

Office use only	Protocol Number: _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Approved Exemption Category _____	
Signature of IRB Chair / Designee _____	Date _____

1.	Developmental Approval: If you already have developmental approval for this research study (you should know if you do), please give the IRB protocol number assigned to the study. More information available here .
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2.	Research Title:	The Impact of Place Attachment on Retention in Summer Camp Counselors
	If different, title used on consent document(s)	
	If class project, include course number and title	

3.	Principal Investigator (PI): The PI must be a member of the Clemson faculty or staff. You cannot be the PI if this is your thesis or dissertation. The PI must have completed IRB-approved human research protections training. Training will be verified by IRB staff before approval is granted. Training instructions available here . CITI training site available here .		
	Name: Dorothy L. Schmalz, Ph.D	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Faculty	
		<input type="checkbox"/> Staff	
	Department: Parks, Recreation & Tourism Managment	E-mail: schmalz@clemson.edu	
	Campus address: 286 Lehotsky Hall	Phone: (864) 656-2184	
		Fax: (864) 656.2226	

4.	Co-Investigator(s): Co-Investigators must have completed IRB-approved human research protections training. Training will be verified by IRB staff before approval is granted. Training instructions available here . CITI training site available here .		
	Name: Kaitlin Nichols		E-mail: krn@g.clemson.edu
	Department: Parks, Recreation, and Tourism Management	Phone: 607-738-9168	
	<input type="checkbox"/> Faculty	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Graduate student	<input type="checkbox"/> Other. Please specify.
	<input type="checkbox"/> Staff	<input type="checkbox"/> Undergraduate student	
	Name:	E-mail:	
	Department:	Phone:	
	<input type="checkbox"/> Faculty	<input type="checkbox"/> Graduate student	<input type="checkbox"/> Other. Please specify.
	<input type="checkbox"/> Staff	<input type="checkbox"/> Undergraduate student	

5.	Additional Research Team Members: All research team members must have completed IRB-approved human research protections training. Training will be verified by IRB staff before approval is granted. Training instructions available here . CITI training site available here . <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> List of additional research team members included. Form available here .
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6. **Research Team Roles:** Describe the role of each member of the research team (everyone included in Items 3, 4 and 5), indicating which research activities will be carried out by each particular member. Team members may be grouped into categories.

Description: Dorothy Schmalz is the committee chair and research head on this thesis research. She will serve as the advisor for all stages of the research process. The research will be conducted primarily by Kaitlin Nichols, who is an M.S. student in the PRTM Department. She will be making contacts to camp directors and monitoring the online surveys. Kaitlin will also create the survey and with the help of Dr. Schmalz, run analysis of the data and write up the results from this research.

7. **Email Communications:** If you would like one or two of your team members (in addition to the PI) to be copied on all email communications, please list these individuals in the box below.

Name:	E-mail:
Name:	E-mail:

8. **Study Purpose:** Provide a brief description of the purpose of the study. Use lay language and avoid technical terms. IRB members not familiar with the area of research must understand the nature of the research. Upon conclusion of the study, how will you share your results (e.g., academic publication, evaluation report to funder, conference presentation)?

Description: The purpose of this research is to examine what may influence a summer camp counselor to return to camp for subsequent summers of employment. This is an employee retention study that focuses on the camp counselors' intent to return based on their emotional attachment to camp. This survey will allow for a better understanding if the level of place attachment influences a camp counselor's intent to return to camp for another summer of employment. The research will also examine the level of place attachment, intent to return, and perceived level of emerging adulthood to gain further understanding of the interaction of variables impact employee retention in camp counselors.

9. **Anticipated Dates of Research:**

Anticipated start date (may not be prior to IRB approval; may be "upon IRB approval"): upon IRB approval

Anticipated completion date (Please include time needed for analysis of individually identifiable data): March 1, 2013

10. **Funding Source:** Please check all that apply.

☐ Submitted for internal funding
☐ Internally funded
☐ Submitted for external funding
 Funding source, if applicable (Do not use initials): _____
 Proposal number (PPN) for the Office of Sponsored Programs: _____
 Name of PI on Funding Proposal: _____

- ☐ Externally funded
 Funding source, if applicable (Do not use initials): _____
 Proposal number (PPN) for the Office of Sponsored Programs: _____
 Name of PI on Funding Proposal: _____
- ☐ Intend to seek funding From whom? _____
☒ Not funded

11. Support provided by Creative Inquiry Initiative: ☐ Yes ☒ No

If yes, all Creative Inquiry students will be members of the research team, please see item # 5.

12. Other IRB Approvals:

Has this research study been presented to any other IRB? ☐ Yes ☒ No

Where? _____ When? _____

If yes, what was their decision? ☐ Approved ☐ Disapproved ☐ Pending

Please attach a copy of any submissions, approvals, or disapprovals from other IRBs.

13. Exempt Review Checklist: To determine whether this study meets the federal requirements for exemption [45 CFR 46.101], please complete the following checklist. This will indicate if your study can be exempted from IRB continuing review.

The Federal Code [45 CFR 46.101] permits research activities in the following six categories to be exempted. Please check the relevant exemption category / categories.

The Federal Office of Human Research Protections has made Decision Charts available [here](#) to help in determining whether a particular study falls within a particular Exemption Category.

Categories of Research Activities Exempt from Continuing Review	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>B1. Research conducted in established or commonly accepted educational settings, involving normal educational practices, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. research on regular and special education instructional strategies, OR b. research on the effectiveness of or the comparison among instructional techniques, curricula, or classroom management methods. <p>NOTE: Survey and interview procedures with minors are exemptible if the activities fall within this category.</p>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<p>B2. Research involving the use of educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures or observation of public behavior, UNLESS:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. the information obtained is recorded in such a manner that human participants can be identified, directly or through identifiers linked to the participants; AND b. any disclosure of the human participants' responses outside the research could reasonably place the participants at risk of criminal or civil liability or be damaging to the participants' financial standing, employability, or reputation. <p>NOTE: Survey and interview techniques which include minors are not exempt. Observation of the public behavior of minors, if the researcher is not a participant, is exempt.</p>

<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>B3. Research involving the use of educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures, or observation of public behavior that is not exempt under Category B2, if:</p> <p>a. the human participants are elected or appointed public officials or candidates for public office, or</p> <p>b. federal statute(s) require(s) without exception that the confidentiality of the personally identifiable information will be maintained throughout the research and thereafter.</p>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>B4. Research, involving the collection or study of existing data, documents, records, pathological specimens, or diagnostic specimens, if these sources are publicly available or if the information is recorded by the investigator in such a manner that participants cannot be identified directly or through identifiers linked to the participants.</p>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>B5. NOTE: Please contact the IRB office before selecting this category since use of this exemption must be initiated by the agency head of the federal funder.</p> <p>Research and demonstration projects which are conducted by or subject to the approval of appropriate Federal Department or Agency heads, and which are designed to study, evaluate, or otherwise examine:</p> <p>a. public benefit or service programs; or</p> <p>b. procedures for obtaining benefits or services under those programs; or</p> <p>c. possible changes in or alternatives to those programs or procedures; or</p> <p>d. possible changes in methods or levels of payment for benefits or services under those programs.</p>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>B6. Taste and food quality evaluation and consumer acceptance studies,</p> <p>a. if wholesome foods without additives are consumed, OR</p> <p>b. if a food is consumed that contains a food ingredient at or below the level and for a use found to be safe, or agricultural chemical or environmental contaminant at or below the level found to be safe, by the Food and Drug Administration or approved by the Environmental Protection Agency or the Food Safety and Inspection Service of the U.S. Department of Agriculture.</p>

14. If you selected Exemption Category B4, please complete questions a through g below:

- a. Provide a detailed description of the data or specimens and what information will be used. _____
- b. What is the source of the data or specimens? _____
- c. Are the data or specimens publicly available without restriction or password? (That is, can the general public obtain the data or specimens? Data are not considered publicly available if access is limited to researchers.)
Yes ☐ No ☐
If yes, please contact the [IRB staff](#) for consultation. You may not be conducting research involving human subjects as defined in the federal regulations governing research involving human subjects (45 CFR 46.102).
- d. If the data or specimens are not publicly available, how are you obtaining permission to access these or to use them for research purposes? _____
Please attach a copy of the correspondence or agreement granting you permission.
- e. How will you receive the data or specimens (e.g., electronic file, access to hard copy records at record-holder's institution, test tube)? _____
- f. How are the data or specimens identified when they are made available to you?
 - 1) ☐ Direct Identifier (e.g., subject name, address, social security number).
 - a) Will you record any direct identifiers that are available to you? Yes* ☐ No ☐
 - b) Will you have access to the data from home or office? Yes* ☐ No ☐

- 2) ☐ Indirect Identifier (e.g., an assigned code that could be used by the investigator or the source providing the data or specimens to identify a subject, such as a pathology tracking number or a tracking code used by the source).
a) Will you or a team member have access to the data set code key? Yes* ☐ No ☐
If you will receive data with indirect identifiers only, please contact the [IRB staff](#) for consultation. You may not be conducting research involving human subjects as defined in the federal regulations governing research involving human subjects (45 CFR 46.102).
- 3) ☐ No Identifier (i.e., neither the researcher nor the source providing the data or specimens can identify a subject based upon information provided with the data or specimens).
If it will be impossible for anyone to identify subjects based upon information provided with the data or specimens, you will not be conducting research involving human subjects as defined in the federal regulations governing research involving human subjects (45 CFR 46). Please contact the [IRB staff](#) for confirmation.
- g. Will any data or specimens be collected from participants after the submission of this application? (Data or specimens are considered to “exist” if ALL the data or specimens to be used for the research have been collected prior to the submission of this application.)
Yes* ☐ No ☐

*Your research does not qualify for exemption from IRB review under Exemption Category B4.

PLEASE NOTE: *If you are applying for exemption only under Exemption Category B4, please skip to question 22.*

15. Study Sample: (Groups specifically targeted for study)

Describe the participants you plan to recruit and the criteria used in the selection process. Indicate if there are any special inclusion or exclusion criteria.

NOTE: If individuals who are incarcerated will be participants, your research is not exemptible. Please complete the Expedited / Full Review Application.

Description: Summer Camp Counselors

Age range of participants: 18 - 24 Projected number of participants: 400

- | | | |
|--|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Employees | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Students | <input type="checkbox"/> Minors (under 18) ¹ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pregnant women ¹ | <input type="checkbox"/> Fetuses / neonates ¹ | <input type="checkbox"/> Educationally / economically disadvantaged ¹ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Minors who are wards of the state, or any other agency, institution, or entity ¹ | <input type="checkbox"/> Individuals who are incarcerated ² | <input type="checkbox"/> Persons incompetent to give valid consent ¹ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other-specify: _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> Military personnel | |

¹ State necessity for using this type of participant: _____

² Please note that research involving prisoners (incarcerated individuals) requires full board review. Please submit an Expedited / Full Board Review Application and a Prisoner Research Addendum (available [here](#)).

16. Study Locations:

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Clemson University | <input type="checkbox"/> Other University / College _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> School System / Individual Schools _____ | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other – specify <u>internet</u> |

You may need to obtain permission if participants will be recruited or data will be obtained through schools, employers, or community organizations. Are you required to obtain permission to gain access to people or to access data that are not publicly available? If yes, provide a research site letter from a person authorized to give you access to the participants or to the data. Guidance regarding Research Site Letters is available [here](#).

- ☐ Research Site Letter(s) not required.
- ☐ Research Site Letter(s) attached.
- ☐ Research Site Letter(s) pending and will be provided when obtained.

17. Recruitment Method:

Describe how research participants will be recruited in the study. How will you identify potential participants? How will you contact them? **Attach a copy of any material you will use to recruit participants (e.g., advertisements, flyers, telephone scripts, verbal recruitment, cover letters, or follow-up reminders).**

Description: Participants will be recruited via email, through the help of camp directors. Names of Camp Directors from all over the United States will be sought through the American Camp Association. The directors will be contacted, given a brief explanation of the study, and asked if they would be willing to forward an online survey to their recent counselors. If they agree to participate, they will be provided with the email link to a survey on SurveyMonkey.com, and asked to please inform the research team how many people they forwarded the link to. In addition, they will also be asked to please post the link on any staff social networking sites the camp has (e.g., Twitter, Facebook, etc.).

18. Participant Incentives:

- a. Will you pay participants? ☐ Yes ☒ No
Amount: \$ _____ When will money be paid?: _____
- b. Will you give participants incentives / gifts / reimbursements? ☒ Yes ☐ No
Describe incentives / gifts / reimbursements: Three Visa gift cards.
Value of incentives / gifts / reimbursements: \$25 each
When will incentives / gifts / reimbursements be given?: After the data has been collected.
- c. Will participants receive course credit? ☐ Yes ☒ No
- d. Will participants receive extra credit? ☐ Yes ☒ No
If yes, an equivalent alternative to research participation must be provided and described in your informed consent document(s).

19. Informed Consent:

- a. Attach a copy of the informational letter or consent script you plan to provide to your participants (and their parents or guardians, if applicable). [Consent Document Templates](#)
- b. Will you use concealment (incomplete disclosure) or deception in this study? ☐ Yes ☒ No
If yes, please see guidance regarding Research Involving Deception or Concealment [here](#), submit a copy of the Additional Pertinent Information / Permission for Use of Data Collected in a Research Study form you will use, and provide a justification in the following space for this use of concealment or deception. _____

20. Procedures:

- a. What data will you collect? The study will collect data that include various factors such as precieved level of emerging adulthood, place attachment, and intent to return to camp. This survey will be used to explore if these factors influence counselors to return to the same camp for another summer of employment. This data will be collected through an internet survey by residential summer camp counselors that worked at camp during the summer of 2012. This survey will also provide information to camp directors about the influence place attachment has on counselor retention.
- b. Please describe in detail the process each participant will experience and how you will obtain the data. Participants will be informed that their participation is minimal and will require only a few minutes of their time. Participation in the study will involve completing an online survey, which in preliminary tests has only taken 15 minutes. There is little risk to participants in completing the survey, however, they will be informed that their participation is voluntary, and that they may stop participation at any time. Furthermore, their responses to the questions are confidential, and their names will not be connected with the information they provide in the survey.
- c. How many participation sessions and how much time will be required for each participant, including follow up sessions? _____
- d. How will you collect data?
- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> in-person contact | <input type="checkbox"/> telephone |
| <input type="checkbox"/> snail mail | <input type="checkbox"/> email |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> website | <input type="checkbox"/> other, describe _____ |

Please include copies of surveys, interview questions, data collection tools and debriefing statements. If survey or interview questions have not been fully developed, provide information on the types of questions to be asked, or a description of the parameters of the survey / interview. Please note: finalized survey or interview instruments will need to be reviewed and approved by amendment, before implementation.

- e. Will you audio record participants? ☐ Yes ☒ No
- f. Will you video record participants? ☐ Yes ☒ No
- g. Will you photograph participants? ☐ Yes ☒ No

If you will audio or video record or take identifiable photographs of participants, please consult the IRB's Guidance on the Use of Audio / Video Recording and Photography [here](#). Please include all the information addressed by this guidance document in the application and, where appropriate, in the consent document(s).

- 21. Protection of Confidentiality:** Describe the security measures you will take to protect the confidentiality of the information obtained. Will participants be identifiable either by name or through demographic data? If yes, how will you protect the identity of the participants and their responses? Where will the data be stored and how will it be secured? Who will have access to the data? How will identifiers be maintained or destroyed after the study is completed?

Description: This study will maintain privacy by keeping both camps and participants private. If a camp director so chooses to post the link to the survey on the camp's Facebook page, that will be their option. Counselors will not be asked to provide their name for the study. If the counselor or participant chooses to participate in the drawing for the Visa gift card, then they will provide their email, however, those emails will only be used for the drawing. For analysis, each survey will be given a number in order to maintain confidentiality.

22. PI Signature:

I have reviewed this research protocol and the informed consent document(s), if applicable. I request approval of this research study by the IRB of Clemson University.

Conflict of Interest Statement:

Could the results of the study provide an actual or potential financial gain to you, a member of your family, or any of the co-investigators, or give the appearance of a potential conflict of interest?

☒ No.

☐ Yes. I agree to disclose any actual or potential conflict of interest prior to IRB action on this study.

[Financial Conflict of Interest Policy for PHS / NIH Supported Research](#)

[Financial Disclosure Policy for All Other Sponsored Programs](#)

[Disclosure Statement for All Other Sponsored Programs](#)

Signature of Principal Investigator

Date

(hard-copy signature only needed if application will not be submitted via PI's email account)

Submission Instructions: Exempt applications are processed as received. There is no deadline for submitting exempt applications for review. Please allow seven to ten business days for processing.

Please submit this application and all associated documents from the Principal Investigator's (PI's) email address to the [IRB staff](#). Receipt of the application electronically from the PI will qualify the application as a signed electronic submission. Alternatively, the signed, hard-copy application may be mailed or delivered to the Office of Research Compliance, 223 Brackett Hall, Clemson, SC 29634-5704.

Appendix B

Camp Recruitment Letter

Date: [Insert Date]

[Recipient]

[Title]

[Company]

[Address 1]

[Address 2]

[Address 3]

Dear [Recipient]:

My name is Kaitlin Nichols and I am graduate student in the Parks, Recreation, and Tourism Management department at Clemson University. I am currently underway with my master's thesis research in which I intend to explore the influences of camp counselor retention. I have a specific interest in the role place attachment plays in a counselor's interest to return to camp. My research advisor, Dr. Dorothy Schmalz, and I are working with the American Camp Association, but we need your help, and that of other camp directors, to complete the study.

From this research, it is my hope to gain a further understanding of what influences camp counselors to return to camp for more than one summer of employment. If directors have a better understanding of what motivates counselors to return, there is possibility for directors to increase intention rates and therefore create a stronger camp program for campers.

We are asking interested camp directors to forward a survey to their 2012 staff. In return for your assistance, we will share the results of the research with you, so that you can gain some insight into methods of retaining staff. This will involve minimal effort on your part. I will need a little information from you about your staff and camp, and for you to forward a link to an on-line survey to your staff. Please let me know if you are interested and willing to help me with my research! If you are interested, please email me and let me know. I will provide you with the survey link and simple procedures for the data collection.

We are excited about this project, and believe that it will provide valuable information to camp directors in understanding what contributes to counselor retention. If you have any questions about the project, or what your involvement will be if you participate, please email (email here) or call me (phone number here). You may also

contact my research advisor via phone (864.656.2184) or email (schmalz@clermson.edu) if you have any questions or concerns.

Thank you for your consideration, and I look forward to hearing from you!

Sincerely,

Kaitlin Nichols
Graduate Student
Parks, Recreation, and Tourism Management
Clemson University

Appendix C

Counselor Recruitment Letter

Hello,

My name is Kaitlin Nichols and I am graduate student in the Parks, Recreation, and Tourism Management department at Clemson University. I am currently underway with my master's thesis research. Your camp director has agreed to contact you to be a part of my study. As a former camp counselor, I am interested in understanding what influences counselors' decisions to return to camp for another summer of employment.

Description of the Study and Your Part in It

Dr. Dart Schmalz and Kaitlin Nichols are inviting you to take part in a research study. Kaitlin is a Parks' Recreation and Tourism Management Master's student at Clemson University. Kaitlin is running this study with the help of Dr. Schmalz. The purpose of this research is to gain more understanding of what influences camp counselors to work at camp.

Your part in the study will be to fill out an online survey, the link is provided at the end of this email, and answer the questions according to own personal feelings and opinions about working at camp.

It will take you approximately 10 – 15 minutes to be in this study.

Risks and Discomforts

There are minimal risks in this research study. Please know that your answers will be kept completely confidential and your answers will not be provided to your camp director.

Possible Benefits

As a former summer camp counselor, Kaitlin along with Dr. Schmalz, hope to gain a further and better understanding of summer camp counselors and why they work at camp. We do not know of any way you would benefit from this research. However, this research may help us understand why counselors are motivated to work at camp.

Incentives

If you choose to participate in this research, you may enter to win one of three, \$25 Visa gift cards. If you want to enter the drawing, you will be asked at the end of the survey to

provide your personal email address so that you can be contacted if you win the random drawing. Your email will be kept confidential and will only be used to contact you if you win the drawing and will not be used or given out for any other reason than the drawing. We would really appreciate your participation in this research.

Protection of Privacy and Confidentiality

We will do everything we can to protect your privacy and confidentiality. We will not tell anybody outside of the research team that you were in this study or what information we collected about you in particular.

We might be required to share the information we collect from you with the Clemson University Office of Research Compliance and the federal Office for Human Research Protections. If this happens, the information would only be used to find out if we ran this study properly and protected your rights in the study.

Choosing to Be in the Study

You do not have to be in this study. You may choose not to take part and you may choose to stop taking part at any time. You will not be punished in any way if you decide not to be in the study or to stop taking part in the study. If you choose to stop taking part in this study, the information you have already provided will be used in a confidential manner.

Contact Information

If you have any questions or concerns about this study or if any problems arise, please contact Dr. Dart Schmalz at Clemson University at schmalz@clemson.edu.

If you have any questions or concerns about your rights in this research study, please contact the Clemson University Office of Research Compliance (ORC) at 864-656-6460 or irb@clemson.edu. If you are outside of the Upstate South Carolina area, please use the ORC's toll-free number, 866-297-3071.

A copy of this form will be given to you.

Thank you,

Kaitlin Nichols
Graduate Student
Parks, Recreation, and Tourism Management
Clemson University

Appendix D

Understanding Camp Counselor Retention Survey

As you complete the questions below, please answer for the camp from which you received this email:

Demographics:

What is your age:

- ☐ 17 and younger
- ☐ 18
- ☐ 19
- ☐ 20
- ☐ 21
- ☐ 22
- ☐ 23
- ☐ 24
- ☐ 25
- ☐ 26 and over

Gender: Male _____ Female _____

Please check all that apply for your current employment status outside of camp:

- ☐ Full Time Employee
- ☐ Part Time Employee
- ☐ Full Time Student
- ☐ Part Time Student
- ☐ Unemployed and not a Student

"We'd like to know about how you view yourself as an independent person. Using the scale below, indicate on a scale from 1 through 4, please indicate the answer that best fits your response to the questions provided."

	Never	Sometimes	Usually	Always
Do you believe that you accept responsibility for yourself?	1	2	3	4
Do you believe that you regularly make independent decisions?	1	2	3	4
Do you believe that you are financially independent at this time?	1	2	3	4

Do you feel that you have reached adulthood?

Yes (1)_____

No (2)_____

In some respects yes, in some respects no (3)_____.

Open- Ended Question:

Please explain your previous answer:

We would also like to know about your experiences at the camp where you worked, and camp in general. When asked about working at camp, please provide the most accurate answer to each of the questions below.

What year was the last year you worked at the camp from which you received this survey?

- ☐ 2012
- ☐ 2011
- ☐ 2010
- ☐ 2009
- ☐ before 2009 (participants can only choose one)

How many years did you work at the camp from which you received this survey?

- ☐ 1
- ☐ 2
- ☐ 3
- ☐ 4
- ☐ 5
- ☐ 6
- ☐ 7 or more years

Have you worked at another camp other than the one you received this survey from?

Yes (1)_____ No (2)_____

At the camp where you worked, how many **days** did a camp session last?

- ☐ 3 – 4
- ☐ 5
- ☐ 6 – 7
- ☐ 8 – 10
- ☐ 11 – 14
- ☐ 15 – 21
- ☐ 22 +

How many weeks were you at camp? This time includes training and when campers were at camp. Round up to the nearest week.

____1
____2
____3
____4
____5
____6
____7
____8
____9 +

Were you a camp counselor (looks after the care and supervision of campers while at camp)?

Yes (1) _____ No (2) _____

Were you an activity specialist (leader or instructor of activities at camp, ex: archery, canoeing, arts and crafts, lifeguard, etc.) at your camp?

Yes (1) _____ No (2) _____

Did you attend a camp as between the ages of 5 - 18?

Yes (1) _____ No (2) _____

If yes, is the camp you worked at the same camp you attended?

Yes (1) _____ No (2) _____

"Next, we would like to know how attached you are to the camp from which you received this survey. Indicate on the scale from 1 to 5, to which degree each statement describes you and how you feel about camp."

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Camp is much better suited for camp counselors than other camps.	1	2	3	4	5
I identify strongly with camp	1	2	3	4	5
Many of my friends/family prefer this camp over other camps.	1	2	3	4	5
I prefer camp's setting and facilities over other camps.	1	2	3	4	5
My friends/ family would be disappointed if I left camp	1	2	3	4	5
Camp is a part of me	1	2	3	4	5
If I were to stop working at camp, I would lose contact with a number of friends	1	2	3	4	5
I feel camp is a part of me	1	2	3	4	5
For the job of camp counselor, I could not imagine anything better than the settings and facilities at camp	1	2	3	4	5
Working at camp says a lot about who I am	1	2	3	4	5
I feel a strong sense of belonging to camp and its settings/facilities	1	2	3	4	5
I associate special people in my life with camp	1	2	3	4	5
I have little, if any, emotional attachment to camp and it's setting/ facilities	1	2	3	4	5
I am very attached to camp	1	2	3	4	5
Because of camp's setting and facilities, I enjoy working at camp more than any other camp	1	2	3	4	5
Camp means a lot to me	1	2	3	4	5

Open- ended questions:

What part of your camp means the most to you?

Now we would like to know whether you intend to return to camp next summer. Indicate on the scale from 1 to 7, please circle the answer that best describes your intentions.

	Strongly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Somewhat Agree	Strongly Agree
I intend to work at the same camp next summer.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I very much want to be working at camp again next summer.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

We would like to know whether you intend to return to camp next summer. Using the scale below, indicate on a scale from 1 through 7, please indicate the answer that best describes your intentions.

	Extremely Unlikely	Very Unlikely	Unlikely	Neutral	Likely	Very Likely	Extremely Likely
How likely is it that you will work at the same camp next summer?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Open Ended Question:

Please give a brief explanation to why or why not you intend to return to camp next summer:

Open Ended Question:

How does your attachment to camp play a role in whether your intent to return to camp next summer?

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